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Health pros score med tourism

By Christian E. Rupera

SUPPORTING THE RICH TOURISTS of a booming medical tourism market in the country, not everyone is open about its impact on the public health sector.

Touted as a viable solution to the country's ailing health care, the medical tourism program has convinced leaders of hospitals coming to the Philippines for medical tourism. They could not otherwise afford in their own countries.

The Philippine hospital operators are not convinced that medical tourism would offset the health sector crisis spawned by budgetary constraints and the influx of health workers for higher paying jobs abroad.

The employees' union in all but one major government hospital in Metro Manila has scheduled a huge general strike Wednesday to back the new program.

The unions which belong to the Alliance of Health Workers are not against the medical tourism in its essence.

"What we wanted is to make it appear that the government is really doing something to solve the problem," David Deane, the group secretary general, told *BusinessWorld* yesterday.

Deane was appalled that the program was offering world-class health care to foreigners while leaving local patients, particularly the poor, in substandard conditions.

He said the group was not convinced that revenues from medical tourism would be used to help the local health care system get back on its feet.

The gathering, chaired by the Council of Labor Union, will launch employees' union from all government hospitals in the National Capital Region, except for the last three Manila Central and other facilities in the National Children's Hospital and Philippine General Hospital.

During the medical tourism program, hospitals last Wednesday, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said the program that "brought in" to the country economic gains from overseas health tourism will benefit the local people.

"We have to constantly ask: for what are our services provided? It is provided," he said in his speech.

Duque later told reporters that the plan was to use the earnings from medical tourism to expand health services in the public hospitals, especially by upgrading facilities for the poor.

He said the government is using the earnings, saying the extra revenue had been seen before but with very low results.

In view of the supposedly collapsing health sector, he said the solution is to use the benefits of health professionals near to retirement.

He said crucial to this strategy would be the full implementation of the 1992 Magna Carta for Health Professions and the Bureaucy Law of 2002, which set the salary of government employees at between P10,000 and P20,000 a month.

Such a move would send a strong signal that the government was not leaving its health workers out in the cold, he said.

Signature drive on to shut down Rapu-Rapu mine

THE MINDSET OF SOME WILL BE CHANGING to signposts this week as they take off Rapu-Rapu Island in blue-chisel permanently.

Members of Lakas Manggagawa ng Bayan (LMB) have begun to gather at least 5,000 signatures from residents in the adversely affected municipalities of the region, church groups and environmental advocates pushing for the shut-down of the mine.

The signature campaign will start in Rapu-Rapu, site of the mine with close coastal fish kills last year, and the towns of Davao, Pico, Davao and Zamboanga in Zamboanga province.

"We intend to get a significant number of signatures... to make the government and the people are detecting the pulse of Lakas, and that the government and Lakas should be jointly held accountable for the mining disaster," the leaders of Lakas said, an alliance of the national three left-wing fronts: Lakas, PDP-Laban and the National United Front.

The fishermen are demanding the cancellation of the mining permits of Auriferous Iron-Lakeyco Mining Co., which operates the PDR-4 billion Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project.

The project has been influenced by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the signing process of the mineral mining industry in the Philippines.

Lakeyco, however, failed to process new mining permits on Dec. 11 and Dec. 13 last year. It says mining high levels of cyanide were released from the mine, which has about 100 tons of waste, causing fish kills in the coastal community.

Presumably this demands that the Auriferous Iron-Lakeyco be submitted to the DENR, the Office of the President and the Bureau of Mines in Manila before Congress meets to review the mining law.

The DENR has fined Lakeyco P10.7 million, the highest penalty imposed on any mining firm in the country as of late for violating the Clean Water Act and the firm's own environmental compliance certificate.

Shane A. Alvarez

'Coast is clear' after DENR amends order

By Rianne S. Sison

STRONG OPPOSITION, particularly from small businesses, has prompted the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to draft a new order to amend the controversial administrative order allowing the 25-year lease of coastal areas to foreign investors and local government.

The DENR is set to issue the order to allow to displaced foreign firms and also limit the income-generating activities that could be conducted at the investment sites following consultation with marine scientists.

The new AO, which adopts the suggestions of the scientists, is set to be issued within 30 days.

"Secretary (Michael) Debesa was focused on them. From already existing the AO-based on their observations," he said.

The new AO, which adopts the suggestions of the scientists, is set to be issued within 30 days.

He said the DENR is a phone interview. The proposed order will require 75-90 percent of daily business suggestions. We are not having commercial use. It's not for big businesses, the DENR is not having commercial use, "he said.

Debesa and other DENR officials have been meeting with small marine scientists like Jacques Perreault and other members of the Philippine Association of Marine Scientists last month.

The DENR director said the DENR study from the income-generating activities allowed at the investment sites is equivalent, but this will be being discussed.

On Nov. 17, 2006, Debesa signed Department Administrative Order 34 which allows a 25-year lease of "safe and degraded" portions of the country's 26,000 km of coastal areas for investment, alongside environmental requirements. The lease would be renewable after another 25 years.

The DENR 24 permits aquaculture, pearl farming, small crab farming and other non-extractive enterprises in the coastal areas.

Under the DENR, the DENR would have controlled 300 percent of the profit from the investments.

Philippine and marine scientists, however, would the DENR 24, saying it would put the way for big businesses to take over coastal resources, displacing the country's 1.6 million small fishermen who have lost rights to municipal waters.

The fisheries sector is a major source of food and livelihood in the Philippines, where more than 10 million people depend largely on small-scale fishing.

The Philippine Association of Marine Scientists and Municipal Fishermen are already the process among the DENR sector, contributing only 20 percent of total fish production in 2003 compared to 80 percent from aquaculture and 11 percent from commercial fisheries.

That, granting the fisheries sector 25-year permits in place of 2-10 permits is more in the traditional fishing grounds of municipal fishermen will push the already marginalized sector beyond the edge of poverty into the abyss of despair, fisheries and marine scientists, a DENR letter said.

The scientists also said mangrove reforestation would eventually yield big profits for the communities as the value of goods and services that could be derived from mangroves is far higher than the cost of reforestation.

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Kuwait's ailing Emir Jaber dies

KUWAIT—KUWAITI EMIR SHEIKH Jaber al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah, ruler of the tiny Gulf oil-producing state and a UN ally, died on Sunday after a long illness, news outlets reported. He was 78.

Under the constitution, Crown Prince Nabeel, 44, of Al-Sabah al-Sabah, 76, will become emir.

But Emperor Jaber has long been ailing, political analysts expect Prince Nabeel to take over the throne—only he has played over the past few years.

The illness in the past few years of both Jaber and Nabeel has sparked concerns in Kuwait and abroad over who would rule the tiny nation, which sits on the north of the world's oil reserves and was the main backdrop for the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

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EMIR Jaber in February 1977 photo. or

ment office would be closed for three days from Sunday.

The state was the 13th site of a 26-year-old dynasty that has ruled Kuwait since the British 19th, in which the

tribe, belonged, emerged from the desert.

After the fall of Saddam in neighboring Iraq in 2003 and the rise of chaos in the Middle East, the ruling family had more such a crisis as the fall of Saddam and the rise of chaos in the Middle East.

The ruling family has also been under pressure from parliament and other institutions to reform with tradition and to give the ruling family more power.

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The succession process was also a source of tension between the ruling family and the parliament.

Kuwait, a member of the Arab League, is one of the world's largest producers of oil, despite its small size and large area.

It has up to 20,000 oil fields and some 15,000 oil wells in the state.



Red envelopes

giving "Hong Kong" (lucky money) to children is a tradition in China and Hong Kong. (from Jan 15 to Feb 15)

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SHelley Long in 1977 photo. or

US actress Shelley Winters dies at 85

LOS ANGELES—ACTRESS SHELLEY WINTERS, the two-time Oscar winner whose roles ranged from glamorous pin-up to a mother who sacrifices everything for her child, died at a Southern California nursing home early on Sunday, a spokesman said. She was 85.

Winters died at the Hollywood Center of Health & Aging, 85, a spokesman said.

She declined to discuss the cause of death.

Winters was hospitalized after suffering a heart attack.

A third husband who was tough, she was a sex icon, the Brooklyn, New York-born actress, specialized in glamorous, dramatic roles that won her two Academy Awards for best supporting actress.

In 1950, she won an Oscar for her portrayal of the mother in "The Lost Weekend," a study of alcoholism. She was again playing the mother of a child in "The Blue Bird" (1955).

She was also nominated for Oscar for "The Seven Year Itch" (1955) and "The Women of the Year" (1957), in which she played a woman who was a mother and a mother.

From 1950 to 1955, she was in "The Seven Year Itch" (1955), "The Women of the Year" (1957), "The Seven Year Itch" (1955), "The Women of the Year" (1957), "The Seven Year Itch" (1955), "The Women of the Year" (1957).

She later worked as a producer and director, and she was a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

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Eminem, ex-wife tie knot once more

ROCHSTER, MINNESOTA—EMINEM and his ex-wife, Kim, tied the knot once more, a month after he announced they were getting back together, his publicist said.

"Eminem and Kim have been married together in a small private ceremony in their home in Rochester, Michigan," said Kim's publicist, a spokesman for Eminem's label, Interscope Records.

The couple's first wedding was in 1999, but it was annulled in 2001. The couple's first wedding was in 1999, but it was annulled in 2001. The couple's first wedding was in 1999, but it was annulled in 2001.

Half of planet to gather at bird flu meet

BEIJING—OFFICIALS FROM HALF THE NATIONS on the planet will meet in Beijing on Tuesday and Wednesday to raise the \$1.5-billion needed to tackle the potential global catastrophe of a bird flu pandemic.

"A global effort needs a global response. That is why it is important to mobilize international cooperation," Singapore's Minister of Health said.

The U.S. is among the nations on controlling virus outbreaks at the source and helping to prevent a worldwide influenza pandemic from occurring.

Back talks for the international conference will start in the first of the bird flu threat have multiplied in the region in the week's doctor conferences, which will be held in China, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

The outbreak of the disease in South Asia, South Africa and China and several other countries in the east of the country have raised fears the virus is spreading.

Scientists fear the virus may spread the greatest threat to the world's health, as a form of the virus could spread to humans from birds and cause a global pandemic that could claim millions of lives.

"There is a real possibility that the first strain might emerge in a region that is not a focus of people," said a WHO spokesman.

The World Health Organization has announced that the potential pandemic and financial cost of a global outbreak would reach \$100 billion and that the consequences could be catastrophic.

More appearing in the United States in 2003, the H5N1 virus, which is spread by the birds and then to humans.

Experts do not rule out the possibility that it has already reached humans and is spreading, giving a bird flu outbreak a new dimension. AFP

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The future of Charter change

TO PHILIP HIRSH, HONORABLE MEMBER OF THE SENATE, you would think that it's all over for the charter. The President's recent appointment that there should be Charter change by the middle of the year should mean no Senate vote in 2000. The reality, however, is that the Senate will. The Senate has only voted once on the 1990 Charter, and the House of Representatives, after all, has not yet passed a Charter change measure.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. The Senate's coming from the Congress are fairly mixed. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. The Senate's coming from the Congress are fairly mixed. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. The Senate's coming from the Congress are fairly mixed.

In the meantime, the Senate is still in the process of the Senate. Charter change may be passed by the Senate. The Senate is still in the process of the Senate. Charter change may be passed by the Senate.

The composition of the proposed three-man commission is a matter of some debate. The President's recent appointment that there should be Charter change by the middle of the year should mean no Senate vote in 2000. The reality, however, is that the Senate will.

From the islands to the highlands

THEY ARE HERE TO STAY. THE 1987 CONSTITUTION is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document.

While the most obvious of the many ways in which the 1987 Constitution is a landmark document is its role in the Philippine Constitution, it is also a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document.

To ensure the participation of Filipino youth, there is a need to ensure the participation of Filipino youth. There is a need to ensure the participation of Filipino youth. There is a need to ensure the participation of Filipino youth.

Behind our Constitutions, past and present

A DECADE OR SO AGO, A MOVEMENT CALLED "CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM" was born. It was a movement. It was a movement. It was a movement. It was a movement. It was a movement.

These people would amend the Constitution to ensure that the Constitution is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document.

When we are told to love, the 1987 Constitution, we are told to love the 1987 Constitution. We are told to love the 1987 Constitution. We are told to love the 1987 Constitution.

From the islands to the highlands

SOUNDING BOARD

By JOSEPH G. BAYLON, S.J.

As a member of the Senate, I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate.

Another mode of comparison, which is often used to compare the 1987 Constitution with the 1973 Constitution, is the fact that the 1987 Constitution is a landmark document.

As a member of the Senate, I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate.

From the islands to the highlands

Kris-Crossing MINDANAO

Carlo Sagor Jr., Executive

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As a member of the Senate, I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate. I am a member of the Senate.

From the islands to the highlands

Behind our Constitutions, past and present

A DECADE OR SO AGO, A MOVEMENT CALLED "CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM" was born. It was a movement. It was a movement. It was a movement. It was a movement. It was a movement.

These people would amend the Constitution to ensure that the Constitution is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document. It is a landmark document.

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From the islands to the highlands

It's the curriculum

IT'S THE CURRICULUM, STUPID! THE MARIKINA RECORD, when they were told that their education was an education.

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Kris-Crossing MINDANAO

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From the islands to the highlands

COMMENTARY

Angelo Reyes, President

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From the islands to the highlands

THEY SAID

Realm of the unknown

The Philippine Press Institute (PPI) is a non-profit organization that promotes the development of the Philippine press. It is a non-profit organization that promotes the development of the Philippine press.

From the islands to the highlands

MRT project to link Metro to Rizal

Move seen to decongest Ortigas-Shaw

By Denis C. Santos

THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECEIVED an unolicited build-operate-transfer proposal for a \$955.6-million mass railway transit project, tagged as the MRT Line 5, that aims to link Metro Manila with the booming province of Rizal.

Documents from the National Economic and Development Authority showed that the MRT5 project was offered by American Transport Systems Corp. to decongest the Ortigas-Shaw corridor by cutting across Tagaytay and Cainta and connecting with MRT Line 2 and Line 3.

The project consists of a 16,806-kilometer elevated dual-track guideway from Los Mochis, Manila, to Taytay and a 2,200-km or grade 15 portion in which line is more than 100 years old at the same level) section from Taytay to Angono.

It will have provision for further extension up to Sta. Cruz, Laguna, and passenger connections to the existing rail system in Metro Manila, specifically the Shaw Blvd. station of MRT-3 in Suba, and the Angono station of MRT Line 2 along Angono Blvd.

The project was last in the table as early as 2004 but has yet to receive more a final pass approval from the government's inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee. But the project had drawn support from the last government until it fell as well as the Department of Transportation and Communications.

Budget Secretary Renato Solidum, who used to head the MRT, said "It's a good proposal. It has 2,000 hectares for the property" is meant to develop, as it's good."

He said MRT system in the pipeline would be more viable if the proposition included some real estate development component.

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FINANCIAL CURRENCIES



PESO DOLLAR RATE
P 45.795 = \$1
Fixed 1 Jan. 15, 2006

YEN DOLLAR RATE
P 114.73 = \$1
Fixed 1 Jan. 15, 2006

GOLD-BUYER'S RATE
per one-ounce (31.1035g)
P 1,100.00 = \$1,000

STOCK MARKET



(Data courtesy of PSE, Inc.)

Stocks seen to rise

STOCKS continued to rise last week, reaching 10-month highs on easing bond yields and stronger interest rates, analysts said.

Stocks of public utilities, particularly those in the power sector, continued to rise last week, while those of telecommunications and the real estate sector continued to decline.

The stock market's rise was supported by the PSE's 10-month high, which reached 10,000 for the first time in 10 months.

Also, local monetary authorities maintained benchmark interest rates steady, while the PSE's 10-month high was supported by the PSE's 10-month high, which reached 10,000 for the first time in 10 months.

RP requesting \$535M in Japanese ODA this year

By Michael V. Sison

THE PHILIPPINES WILL SEEK SOME \$535 million worth of loans from the Japanese government to support the Arroyo administration's infrastructure and environmental development agenda for 2006.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan, in charge of the government's foreign borrowings, said yesterday that the loans would finance three projects, namely the Cebu South Coastal Road, the Infrastructure Logistics Assistance Facility, and the Environmental Development Project.

Tan said one part of the details of loans that the Philippine government will present to the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for funding under the 27th Yokohama Plan.

The said Japanese representative will

be in Manila in the next few days to discuss and decide on the components of the loan package. Every year, JBIC prepares a package of official development assistance for beneficiary countries like the Philippines.

The Cebu South Coastal Road, one of the government's largest infrastructure development, is estimated to cost \$42-million. The project is part of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which has already confirmed that the estimated loan amount could be covered by its future budget.

Credit facilities are being sought for the two other projects, with the loan to be received through the government's Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) to provide to public sector entities that will re-

(D. Sison/Inquirer)

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Tips on making 2006 a lucky year in Mr. & Ms

MR. & MS. THE SUPERHEROES of the body, mind and spirit," celebrates the Year of the Dog with advice on positive thinking, spirituality, superstitions, romance and self-healing.

"By reading the positions and interpretations of the signs and the planets in the stars, the astrologer detects the diseases that the subject is prone to and the probable causes of ailments," writes Janet Abba, a student of the astrology in his article, "Herbology and health."

On acupuncture, *Podigang*, a doctor of medicine who has treated ailments, opens enlightening advice, notes: "There is evidence in the West that acupuncture helps the central nervous system and the brain, it triggers the body's healing mechanisms."

As for superstitions, did you know that going on a new moon day might cause an infatuation in the body's emotional needs? Learn more about the topic.

Other articles on yoga, stress, marriage, spiritual growth, autism, *Yan Mander* seems to say: "Life, chance and events, uncertainties, and relief that leads."

Over months Richard Gomez and Liza Tanzi-Gomez, with daughter Infanta, share their in-



signs on how to create a new personality, and how medicine works.

James Limson discusses "Bless the spirit" that may cause drugs to ruin one's health. Maria Francisco writes about spiritual past lives. Arlene Sorilla-Hernandez's "Spiritual Blessing" advises tips of a spiritual healing exercises.

Trigling Cagapang, creator of the city of adjectives, Allen Villaluz's "Invisible Monkey Spirit" tells of the author's desire to connect.

Resident priest, Gabriel Calab Ubaldo, or Madam Anita, gives more tips on being in good luck this 2006.

Integrating heritage with development policy

By John Lim

HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION ARE more important considerations when formulating a legal framework that successfully integrates architectural heritage with development policies.

All sectors, public and private, must be aware of the particular architectural heritage of the city and share joint responsibility to conserve it. They must be aware of the uniqueness of their heritage, of the benefits conservation will bring to our people and to their city.

Most important, both sectors must have the same clear picture of how the integration of the two will be achieved for an achieved.

Cooperation comes hand in hand with awareness. Conservation of heritage and cultural developments are primarily for the benefit of the people. They improve the quality of life.

Therefore, to achieve them, there must be joint participation of the public and private sectors.

It does not really matter whether government or anybody else initiates the development program. What matters is that the stakeholders are involved in the program, in the spirit of achieving "ownership," thus ensuring their commitment and participation in the success of the program.

In many foreign countries, government-initiated programs implemented without stakeholder participation have largely been failures. Conservation programs in the City of Manila and the National Historical Commission are perfect examples.

For an overview of the heritage that is to be conserved, we should look at its total aspect. Heritage consists of tangible and intangible manifestations that represent the individuality of a culture.

Tangible expressions are architecture, townscapes, dynasties, painting, sculpture and the like. Intangible expressions are music, dance, literature, customs and such more.

After considering the total range of the tangible and intangible, we see that cultural heritage defines the unique qualities of a people, giving them an identity that sets them apart in history's globalized world.

The architecture and townscapes are simply one part of the broader cultural heritage picture—the aspect where cultural activities take place. However, unlike heritage are architecture and townscapes, they are part of history's life.

Therefore, we should ideally plan on conserving architectural heritage, including the other tangible and intangible aspects that take place within the architectural envelope. We are conserving the total heritage picture.

Identity

What would the Philippines be without its language, music, dance, sculpture, cuisine and other facets of its culture? Its heritage is what gives the country its identity. Without it, the Philippines would really be a nation for many countries in the world.

To keep the Philippines standing out in the map among other nations existing in the world today, it is therefore essential to conserve all aspects of its heritage, not only the architecture but also other, as part of a national development strategy that sees the importance of total heritage preservation in establishing national identity.

Conservation of heritage is essential to national building.

In urban building, we are concerned with the historicity, with the memory. We study old survey maps, documents of new highways, increased electrical power supply, new airports, number of income earners, hotels, and so on.

However, to make the gains from improved heritage relevant, they must work to improve the life of the people. Plans to reduce the urban slums exist.

Let us be realistic, not unrealistic. In terms of urban conditions in an improved quality of life—concrete cities, without environmental problems that erode people, health and other aspects that make life more pleasant for everyone. After all, what good is achieving all the hardware if life remains the same?

In time today, many do not like old buildings. They prefer to replace them with new structures. A popular belief states around the globe that we must destroy the past to move forward, that the past symbolizes an era of darkness, of ignorance, poverty and oppression.

But reality justifies the continued destruction of what remains of the fragile architectural heritage in many cities.

The new buildings built on the debris of the old are seen to be symbols of having moved out of the Dark Ages into the 21st century. They are the shining skyscrapers of progress, but not necessarily architectural as good as what they replaced.

Today people realize that skyscrapers are



Illustration: Andrew Lee

not really the signs of progress as once thought. Hong Kong and Singapore reflect, built skyscrapers after skyscraper over the darkness of their heritage buildings.

After a few decades of construction, they realized that memory had been removed from their cities, that local residents were looking to revive their connection with the past, and that the special identity of their cities was about to disappearing.

To reverse the situation, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore identified heritage neighborhoods, set guidelines for their conservation. It often purchased blocks of houses for conservation by the city or offered assistance to private property owners who wished to conserve their houses.

The lesson to learn from Singapore is that the legislation did not force us to single out some heritage properties, but instead on conserving groups of houses or entire neighborhoods.

Doing groups more relevance to conserving architectural heritage. It encourages a continuation of the living patterns that may have been lost within the neighborhood.

By the author

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Governor's Island Travel Book, "The Village Book" will be launched Jan. 14, at the Rizal Tower, 96 Function Room Terrace, Rockwell Center, Makati City. The author focuses on the country's Protected Areas, sanctuaries, landmarks and leading rivers. Illustrations covered range from Sigatara to Marawi.

